

to catch their train home. Joan, Betty, and Jean Hood, Euphrane, Kathleen, and John Richardson, Alison and Moray MacLagan, Joan and Henry Ford, Ivan Findlay, Elsa Abernethy, and the four Lawries themselves, Eva, Ada, James, and Alice, Miss Mucklow, Wilkinson, Strachan, and Macdonald, all managed to come.

The children were so very happy together, and it seemed such a splendid way to make them realize that they belong to a great big school. They seemed so different from other children, so natural and friendly, as if they were old friends meeting! And they had all sorts of interesting things to talk about.

When the party had arrived they all drew little cards from a basket. The cards had been painted beforehand by Eva, Ada, James, and Alice. On them were wild flowers or their fruits, as, for example, a wild rose on one card, and a rose hip on the other. Each child had thus to find his partner for tea, either the fruit or the flower as the case might be.

After tea we all came up to the schoolroom, where ducking for apples, balancing in a clothes basket, hitting bags of nuts blindfold, etc., took place. At the same time I was sitting in a tent, in a little dark room, dressed as an old witch, to tell fortunes. The great joy to me was that many of the little ones went home believing that they had seen a real witch, and full of wonder as to where she came from, and where she had gone to!

Later we went to the drawing-room, where the carpet had been taken up, and had dancing and games, until all too soon our friends found it was time for them to go home.—Yours, etc.,

PHYLLIS N. BOWSER.

The Old Grammar School,
Woodstock, Oxon.
December 11th, 1917.

DEAR EDITOR,

It has been suggested to me that I should write and tell you the following, on the chance that other groups of P.U.S. children might be able to do something of the same kind.

I knew that in the Derbyshire village where Miss Gertrude Bell (who is known to so many of us) has a post, the whole village school had fairly lately joined the P.U.S. Their difficulty is a not at all uncommon one in such a case—namely, how to meet the book bill.

My class has just given a public entertainment for the Red Cross and other charitable objects, and we also sent a donation to the book fund of the school mentioned, for which Miss Bell's own pupils, with the village children, are themselves giving a play this week. There are a good many such schools longing to join us; and if those who already belong, either in families or in private schools, could set out definitely to try and help those who want so much to come in, and who are at present prevented, in part at least, by a cause such as this, I am sure their efforts would be more than appreciated, and that they would be doing the country a real service.

In this magazine, at least, this last statement needs absolutely no explanation whatever!

As a way of bringing home to one's pupils the fact that they do not by any means make the P.U.S., or that the P.U.S. is not a name for them alone, such a plan works wonders; and the pleasure the children have in doing something for their unknown schoolfellows is very great.—Yours sincerely,

KATHLEEN M. CLENDINNEN.

DEAR EDITOR,

I have the following second-hand books for sale at half-price: *Lyra Heroica*, *First History of France* (two copies), *English History from Original Sources* (Book 2), *Ball Games* (by A. R. James), *Ballads Old and New*, *Practical Geometry* (by Hall & Stevens), *Story of King Alfred*, *Buë's First French book*, *Oliver's Botany*, *Laws of Everyday Life*, *Industries of Animals*, *Ambleside Geography* (books 1, 2 copies; 2 and 3).—Yours sincerely,

G. M. BERNAU.

THE BOTTICELLI PICTURES.

Six pictures by Sandro Botticelli! What a possibility! What a world of romance the mere sound of the words

opens out to us. What fairy forms flit through our minds, on a path of golden glittering pebbles, blown by gossamer clad zephyrs, through mysterious woods of olive and of pine! How we sink back into the very heart of Florence at her zenith, and wander in its sunny streets to the sound of jingling harness and twanging lutes, as the train of the young Medici and their friends pass and repass on the warm cobbles. What an odour of sweet essences seems to rise round the name of La Bella Simonetta, and how we strain to catch a glimpse of her pearl-sewn hair as she passes by! And surely in the olive-clad slopes that surround that fairest of cities, it is there we shall find the court of the Virgin-Queen of Heaven, her infant son enthroned on her lap, attended by her court of adoring pathetic-faced angels, writing her glowing words of praise and humility in the golden book that they hold before her! Go with Botticelli and you will see all this; and far more—you will see the Force of Temporal Power in the Palace of the Medici Princes, the gaiety of the Tuscan nature in the gardens of their sons; you will catch the fervour of Fra Savonarola's preaching, and feel the horror of his shameful death. And you will long for a soul as great as his to hear his voice and follow it.

But to our six pictures. We must begin with the painter's youth, the age of joy, and where should we turn for the most graceful expression of joy but to the Greeks? So while Lorenzo de Medici and Poliziano sang their idylls and told their Grecian tales, Botticelli translated them into colour. And flower-decked Flora once more scatters her treasures where Mercury has dispelled the mists of winter. I am not sure whether I prefer the glorious whole of this wonderful picture, the *Prima-vera*, new life, that I feel has something fresh of the wonders of spring and birth to tell me each time I see it, or whether I like the tender details that prick one's heart with such pure joy as one sees them. The feet of the Graces, their twining fingers, the robe of Zephyr, the entirely pagan expression of Flora's face, the brightening of the trees by the oranges, the wonderful line of the limbs of Mercury; what a joy they all are! Can we go on? Is it not the embodiment of spring? Let us keep this priceless treasure as a talisman against all the fogs and frosts of winter. With the Graces still in our eyes we go on to Jethro's daughter. Here we find the nymphs

have exchanged their gossamer for wool and silk, and their dancing for spinning and sheep tending. Mrs. Cartwright says Zipporah holds the distaff and the apple-branch, symbols of labour and its reward. Naturally in this picture, part of a great fresco, we do not get the detail and delicacy we had in the *Prima-vera*; but there is the same poetry of feeling and passionate sense of the beautiful, and of the fitness of things, both in the maidens and in the rather haggard, travel-worn face of Moses, and in the unhewn tree-trunk that apparently supports the clumsy machinery of the well. I love, too, the beautiful gesture of the maid as she explains the courtesy of the stranger to her mistress. It is one of those pictures we want to go on—turn over, and see what happened next. Unfortunately we must go to Rome to see that!

And now we get to the Savonarola period, when under the influence of the great preacher Botticelli glorified the Court of Heaven, and those wonderful madonnas gazed from his canvases, seeing the thoughts of men's hearts and turning them to the contemplation of their own infinite purity.

Which is your favourite angel of these five? I love each one best in turn. The two elder ones, who hold her beautiful crown over the Virgin's head, the sweet-faced motherly angel who shepherds the younger ones who hold the book, surely with a gesture of love and tenderness caught from the Divine Mother herself; or the rapt-faced skilful child who holds the ink pot, his clever hands doing their work unconsciously while he gazes at the Queen of his adoration. Or this last veriest trio of angels who is too much interested in the dexterity of his brother to attend to his own share of the business at all! I love them all. There is no paganism here. It is the atmosphere of devotion and gentleness that we find in these Florentine boy-angels who make the Court of their Sweet Queen.

I think in taking the Nativity with the children we cannot do better than read them the description given in Mrs. Cartwright's book, *The Painters of Florence*, which I will presume we all have, so shall not quote. The picture is full of the most exquisite detail. The little group of angels on the roof of the stable I love, and the group of shepherds ushered up by the angel to adore. How lovely is the child

who lifts up his tiny arms to the face of his worshipping mother, and how full of grace and humility the figure of St. Joseph, bowed in awe behind this Wonder of the World!

There seem to be tiers of stories in this picture. The angels welcoming the monks as they rise from their graves, the Holy Event itself that they are to be led up that winding path to see; the three singing angels on the roof (are those their crowns, I wonder, that float above them in the air?) and the circle of dancing spirits that weave a wonder of song and glory as a canopy to the humble throne of the King of Kings beneath them. I want to have one to look at; wings and palms and feet and drapery, are they not figures of dream-like beauty, bringing the same sensation of exquisite ecstasy that a vision in dreamland does, or the sudden lifting up of one's heart when the first wood anemones dance before us. It is with great regret we turn from these glories to the sad splendour of Calumny. I do not think the children will realize this picture at all, and surely we should wish to keep the sadness of such evil from them. But by the time you get to Calumny, your children will have had their lesson on Savonarola, and will be ready to pour all their warm-hearted sympathy into this picture, and realize Botticelli's passionate anger and grief at his martyrdom. It is a picture of marvellous contrasts. The purity of line in the beautiful Grecian arches with their marvellous figures and frieze, with the turmoil of broken lines and the discord expression in the group of figures that make the subject of the picture. It is a picture full of noise and clamour. Truth is the only silent actor; Ignorance and Suspicion shriek in Midas's ears; Treachery and Intrigue ply their feverish ministrations on their mistress, and Envy defies the King with lifted hand shouting him down. There is a spirit of horror in the whole conception that makes the picture one of the most marvellous portrayals of human emotion ever achieved by the hand of man. The mutterings of the hag Remorse have in them nothing of repentance; anger rather is in her attitude as she jeers at the appeal of Truth.

It will be somewhat of a relief to turn from this to the peaceful happiness of the young Tobias. The hands in this picture are so lovely, the difference of expression in the three archangels, and all the gentle simplicity of the land-

scape. No flowery dream meadow this, but the stern, rather barren sandy shores of the river where "the young man" has been fishing. How easily and freely they stride along in the fresh morning air, while the lad pours out all his hopes and fears for this safe accomplishment of his mission to his guide. I think we shall all love the armour of St. Michael, and the gentle sternness of his face. I wonder if it will remind the children of Sir Galahad. Truly I think Botticelli must have remembered his dead friend Guiliano de Medici, and the gallant picture he made in the tournament on the Piazza da Santa Croce. We shall want to go a long way with these as our guides to reach the city of promise to which they will lead us—a city of fulfilment now for the great master who created them.

E. C. ALLEN.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND OUR PART IN THEM.

I was very glad to hear from our Editor that there was a scheme to start discussions of social questions in the PIANTA. I think everyone realizes their overwhelming importance at the present time, in view of the period of reconstruction which must follow the war if Britain is to be the better, and not disastrously the worse, for this time of trial. But do we all, I wonder, realize how much we ourselves can do, what responsibility is laid on us, as Ambleside students, in this matter? Have we thought how much will depend on the boys and girls we are teaching now for the building of that better Britain that is to be? Our pupils belong to the class which, till recently, by reason of birth, property, and education, has taken the lead, to a very great extent, in the affairs of the State. But new ideas are abroad to-day, the old order is changing, new thoughts and aspirations, born long before the war, and growing for the most part silently and slowly, have suddenly attained their full strength. Is the result to be wise reform and reconstruction, a setting of their house in order by a united nation, or is it to be revolution, class hatred, and civil war?

The answer will depend very largely upon the attitude of the class to which our children belong.

Before considering the question of what our part in all this is to be, I think we should leave generalities for the moment, and mention some of the definite problems before our nation.

The following is a classification of the population in urban districts:—

	Per cent.	Per cent.
A. Criminals9	In real poverty and want 30.7
B. Casuals in chronic want ...	7.5	
C. Small earnings ...	22.3	
D. Well paid artisans ...	51.5	In comfort 69.3
E. Income tax paying classes ...	17.8	

At first sight the larger percentage in Class D seems an encouraging feature, but we cannot, as Christians, or as citizens, be content while there are still 30.7 per cent. of our fellow-countrymen in actual poverty and want. And when we realize that Classes A B and C have their ranks continually swelled by men from D, we see that there is something very far wrong. Strong healthy men from the country flock into our large cities, where they settle and marry, and do all the heavy work; their children are not so strong and healthy, though quicker and sharper; and so on through the years, each generation weaker than the last, till the stock finally dies out. So the Classes A B and C are filled largely by the wearing down of D in health, accompanied by a corresponding deterioration, mentally and morally. This may seem an over-gloomy picture when we see so many comfortable, prosperous working people around us; but we are only looking at one stage of a process which takes years. Even now we can see enough of the depopulation of our country districts, and of the state of affairs in our slums, to cause grave disquietude, and slum workers can tell us that they have seen the whole process worked out in their experience again and again. The most serious thing is that the supply of fit healthy men from the country is becoming exhausted, for few return. Of course it does not invariably work out in the way described, but it does so far more often than we would ever imagine, and is a very serious symptom. Why, after all, should it ever happen? The answer to this is a series of problems to which we must find

a solution if we are to build an ideal nation, and which are exercising the minds of all our best men and women to-day.

1. *Housing*.—The supply of houses is totally inadequate, and the houses themselves are bad. At the root of this problem is the high price of land for building purposes, and the high taxation of land so used.

BOOKS.—*Cities in Evolution*. Patrick Geddes. Williams and Norgate, 7s. 6d. *Housing*. Percy Alden and Edward E. Hayward. Headley, 1s. *Homes of the London Poor*. Octavia Hill. Macmillan, 1s.

2. *Work*.—The hours of work are improving, but there is still far too much overwork, especially in the case of women. Another consideration is the monotonous and uninspiring nature of the work in most cases. The whole awful problem of sweating arises here. (See the publications of the National Anti-Sweating League, 133, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.)

3. *Unemployment*.—The insecurity of employment is a very serious problem, both in its material and moral effects. The unemployed man is only too apt to become the unemployable, and end his days in the workhouse, if not the prison, and when we mention the workhouse we find ourselves up against the question of the urgently needed reform of the Poor Law.

BOOKS.—*Unemployment*. Beveridge. *Problems of Poverty*. J. A. Hobson. Methuen, 2s. 6d.

4. *Wages*.—One of the most debatable points in the whole subject. What is to be the basis for the scale of wages? Should wages be regulated by the requirements of the worker, or the amount or nature of the work he does, or the supply of workers, or the profits of the business? This raises the huge question of our industrial system, with its competitive basis. Some say that the whole idea of competition is wrong and un-Christian, that men should work for the public good and not for private gain, while others say that it is the very life-principle of industry, and perfectly compatible with Christianity. The Whitley Report, recently adopted by the Government, is very interesting to study in this connection.

BOOKS.—*Memorandum on the Industrial Situation after the War*. Garton Foundation. Harrison, 1s. *Competition: A Study in Human Motive*. Collegium. Macmillan, 3s. 6d.

Women in Industry. Miss G. Tuckwell. Women's Industrial Council, 2s. *Women and Labour.* Olive Schreiner. Unwin, 8s. 6d.

5. *Lack of Rational and Pure Amusements.*—Sometimes it is a case of the lack of actual provision for decent recreation, sometimes the lack of time or money or taste for it. Connected with this are the questions of gambling and drunkenness and worse. The want of proper recreation falls most heavily of course on the young.

Books.—Reports of Cinema Commissions, etc. *The Spirit of Youth in our City Streets.* Jane Addams. New York. Macmillan, 4s. 6d.

6. *Education.*—Little need be said on this subject to House of Education students, especially as our attention is now being more and more turned to the elementary schools, and so to the social aspect of education. The trouble with popular education just now is that "we have given them enough to waken them to what life might give them, but not enough to show them what to aim at, or how to get it." Education is one of the most fundamental problems of all, for it is at the root of so many things.

BOOKS ON THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF EDUCATION.—*The Town Child.* Reginald Bray. Fisher Unwin, 3s. 6d. *The Children.* Prof. Darroch. T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1s. or 6d.

I have spent more time than I meant on these questions, but I was anxious to say enough to suggest lines of discussion, and these are the things on which discussion is possible, though they are not the most important things. What really matters most is the spirit in which all classes attack the problems of reconstruction, and in the end it all resolves itself into the question of the Christianizing of our national life; it is in the spirit of Christ that these things must be faced, call that spirit what you will. Here is where we teachers can help. We can do so much to influence the attitude of our children (and even sometimes of their parents!) towards their poorer and less fortunate neighbours. We must help them to a real understanding and sympathy, free from all taint of patronage, based on a frank human interest in their fellow-men. We must teach them to go behind the action done to the circumstances and motives of the doer, but first we must learn it ourselves. Before we condemn the soldier's wife or munition girl for buying a fur

coat or a diamond ring, let us try to imagine what it must be to go on year in and year out with only just enough for the bare necessities of existence, never able to buy a single thing one wants but does not really need, and then to possess suddenly what seem huge sums without any training in the management of money. And if we then condemn, let us at least apply the same standards to the expenditure on luxuries and pleasure of the wealthier classes. This is simply an illustration of the aptitude we must foster in our children, both indirectly by our example and directly by books and definite teaching. Let us lead them to a spirit of wondering admiration for all the beauty and strength and goodness to be found in most unlikely surroundings, and with it a spirit of humble recognition of the trust reposed in them by God to use their advantages and opportunities for the establishment of His Kingdom in our land.

"I will not cease from mental strife,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

"Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it."

BOOKS TO READ FOR A PICTURE OF THE LIFE OF THE POOR.—*Across the Bridges.* Alex. Paterson. Edward Arnold, 1s. *Round about £1 a Week.* Mrs. Pember Reeves. Bell, 2s. 6d. *How the Labourer Lives.* Seebohm Rowntree. Nelson, 2s. *The Queen's Poor.* Miss Loane. Edward Arnold, 3s. 6d. *Neighbours and Friends.* Miss Loane. Edward Arnold, 6s.

BOOKS FOR STUDY, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION, ETC.—*I Serve.* Geo. H. Green. A. and C. Black. Also the Student Christian Movement text books for social study circles, especially the new one, *Citizenship*, by M. Cécile Matheson.